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9 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
12 Plaintiff,
13 v.
14 JASON CELES,
15 Defendant.
16

CASE NO. 1:20-CR-00056-NONE-SKO

STIPULATION REGARDING EXCLUDABLE
TIME PERIODS UNDER SPEEDY TRIAL ACT;
FINDINGS AND ORDER

DATE: August 31, 2020
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
COURT: Hon. Sheila K. Oberto

17 This case is set for a status conference on August 31, 2020. On April 17, 2020, this Court issued
18 General Order 617, which suspends all jury trials in the Eastern District of California scheduled to
19 commence before June 15, 2020 and allows district judges to continue all criminal matters to a date after
20 June 1. This and previous General Orders were entered to address public health concerns related to
21 COVID-19.

22 Although the General Orders address the district-wide health concern, the Supreme Court has
23 emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act's end-of-justice provision "counteract[s] substantive
24 openendedness with procedural strictness," "demand[ing] on-the-record findings" in a particular case.
25 *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). "[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no
26 exclusion under" § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. Moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at
27 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a
28 judge ordering an ends-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record "either orally

1 or in writing”).

2 Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory
3 and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, and 617 require specific supplementation. Ends-of-justice
4 continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such continuance on the basis of his findings that
5 the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public and the
6 defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A). Moreover, no such period is excludable unless
7 “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either orally or in writing, its reason or finding that the
8 ends of justice served by the granting of such continuance outweigh the best interests of the public and
9 the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

10 The General Orders exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code
11 T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics,
12 natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such
13 circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance
14 following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court
15 recognized that the eruption made it impossible for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-68; *see also United*
16 *States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time following the
17 September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency). The coronavirus is posing a
18 similar, albeit more enduring, barrier to the prompt proceedings mandated by the statutory rules.

19 In light of the societal context created by the foregoing, this Court should consider the following
20 case-specific facts in finding excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-
21 justice exception, § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4).¹ If continued, this Court should designate a new date
22 for the status conference. *United States v. Lewis*, 611 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (noting any
23 pretrial continuance must be “specifically limited in time”).

24 STIPULATION

25 Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendant, by and
26 through defendant’s counsel of record, hereby stipulate as follows:

27 ¹ The parties note that General Order 612 acknowledges that a district judge may make
28 “additional findings to support the exclusion” at the judge’s discretion. General Order 612, ¶ 5 (E.D.
Cal. March 18, 2020).

1 1. By previous order, this matter was set for status on August 31, 2020.

2 2. By this stipulation, defendant now moves to continue the status conference until
3 November 16, 2020, and to exclude time between August 31, 2020, and November 16, 2020, under
4 Local Code T4.

5 3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

6 a) The government has represented that the discovery associated with this case
7 includes investigative reports and related documents, body camera footage, criminal history
8 reports, and court documents. All of this discovery has been either produced directly to counsel
9 and/or made available for inspection and copying.

10 b) Counsel for defendant desires additional time to research and prepare a motion to
11 suppress, review discovery provided by the government, conduct additional investigation
12 regarding the charges, consult with his client, and discuss potential resolution with the
13 government.

14 c) Counsel for defendant believes that failure to grant the above-requested
15 continuance would deny him/her the reasonable time necessary for effective preparation, taking
16 into account the exercise of due diligence.

17 d) The government does not object to the continuance.

18 e) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the
19 case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendant in a trial within the
20 original date prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

21 f) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161,
22 et seq., within which trial must commence, the time period of August 31, 2020 to November 16,
23 2020, inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) [Local Code
24 T4] because it results from a continuance granted by the Court at defendant's request on the basis
25 of the Court's finding that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best
26 interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.

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3 4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the
4 Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which a trial
5 must commence.

6 IT IS SO STIPULATED.

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9 Dated: August 24, 2020

McGREGOR W. SCOTT
United States Attorney

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11 /s/ KATHERINE E. SCHUH
KATHERINE E. SCHUH
Assistant United States Attorney

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14 Dated: August 24, 2020

/s/ DOUGLAS FOSTER
DOUGLAS FOSTER
Counsel for Defendant
JASON CELES

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17 **FINDINGS AND ORDER**

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19 IT IS SO ORDERED.

20 Dated: **August 25, 2020**

/s/ *Sheila H. Oberto*
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE